

SECOND

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE N. Y. SANITARY ASSOCIATION

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DEC. 1860.

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IN presenting the Report of the work undertaken by this Association during the second year of its history, the Council would refer to the Report of the previous year, for a concise statement of the plan of operations adopted and commenced under its direction. The labors that were begun during the first year, have been steadily advancing during the past twelve months, and the great objects of the Association have been kept steadily in view by those who have co-operated in its undertakings. Harmony and an increasing interest in the purposes and efforts of the Association have marked the history of the year now closing; and some progress has been made towards the accomplishment of the ultimate objects of our organization.

The meetings of the Association have been regularly kept up and well attended, and they have been characterized by a steadily increasing interest. They have afforded the proper opportunities for a free interchange of thought, and the dis-

cussion of a great variety of practical questions relating to sanitary improvements and various departments of hygiene. Had our organization no other design, and did it fulfil no other end than this of inviting such open discussion and free interchanges of thought and the results of observation and study, this single object is of sufficient importance, and it is worthy to receive all the labors and interest that are required for maintaining the Association. Indeed, this constituted *one* of the several objects that induced the organization of the friends of sanitary improvement. A widespread popular interest in, and a better knowledge of, the laws of life and health, are ends that cannot be attained without patient inquiry and free discussion. Hence the latter may justly be regarded as being only the means for the attainment of the more important and permanent ends of the Association, viz. the investigation and diffusion of useful knowledge relating to the health and welfare of the people. But the full attainment of such ultimate results necessarily contemplates and will require permanency of effort, and such a disinterestedness of purpose as will neither be relaxed nor thwarted by the difficulties and delays that are experienced in the work of sanitary and social improvement.

The NEW YORK SANITARY ASSOCIATION must be regarded as a *permanent organization*. The human necessities and the philanthropic obligations which called it into existence, will continue so long as ignorance, neglect, and selfishness, continue to be the great producing causes of disease, suffering, and demoralization, among the various classes of our fellow beings. It is believed that the plan and purposes of the Association are sufficiently flexible, and that its design and spirit possess the requisite scope and catholicity, to meet incidental as well as the constant demands and necessities for the co-operation of sanitary science and an enlightened



philanthropy in the promotion of personal and public hygiene.

The labors of the Association during the present, as well as during the preceding year, have satisfactorily demonstrated its general adaptedness for a varied and harmonious application of its services. Though at this early period of its history the labors which have been committed to the various committees have been but partially matured, yet much good work has already been accomplished, a vast amount of labor performed, a great variety of inquiries instituted, and profitable discussion awakened, as the following brief summary of the Association's proceedings will show.

#### SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS.

In this abstract, taken from the Minutes of the Association, it is not proposed to refer to any of the incidental discussions and executive business of the several meetings, but only to the permanent and systematic undertakings of this body.

The regular labors of the Association were spontaneously entered upon at the first meeting after its organization, by resolutions and discussions upon the following subjects: *First*, A request that the Council should submit a system of policy calculated to improve the general and local drainage of the city. *Second*, A similar reference and request respecting the publication of a Journal of Health. *Third*, A committee was appointed to report upon the hygienic condition and physical education of infants and children in this city.

In reference to the *first* of these propositions, the Council appointed the well known topographical engineer, Egbert L. Vielè, Esq., to undertake the important work of investigation which the Association desired on the subject of systematic and improved drainage. The proposition for the

establishment of a periodical, to be exclusively devoted to sanitary and social improvement, is still under consideration, with a prospect of eventual success in making the press contribute more largely and effectually to the diffusion of practical information on this subject. The final report upon the *third* subject of inquiry has not yet been rendered; but the members of the Association, and thousands of our fellow-citizens, will long remember the verbal report that was made by the venerable chairman of that committee. The life and death scenes he reproduced from his personal observations left lasting impressions.

But, without referring to results, our summary shows that the Association commenced the formation of a library of books relating to sanitary, social, and economical improvements; that a committee was appointed to report on the *cellar population of the city*, and that in due time partial reports and interesting discussions were had upon that subject; that a committee was called to examine the Health Laws of the city and the State, and that much labor was bestowed upon that subject, and the preparation of plans for the improvement of those laws, or the establishment of a more comprehensive sanitary code; that memorials were drafted by those committees, and numerous signed by members and their fellow-citizens, petitioning the Legislature for such improvements in the laws; that special committees were delegated to confer with legislators in reference to this subject, and that much progress was made towards the ultimate attainment of this desirable object; that, by a special committee, the Association has undertaken to prepare statistics and plans calculated to aid the extension of vaccination, and thereby diminish the ravages of *small-pox*; while at the same time another committee has stood in readiness to co-operate with legislators in plans for encouraging *vaccination*.

The Third National Sanitary and Quarantine Convention having invited this Association to unite in the deliberations of that body, the call was responded to by a full representation of delegates; and both in the Third and the Fourth Annual Sessions of that important organization, our local Association had the privilege of contributing largely to the interest and success of the deliberations of the National Sanitary Congress.

Investigations respecting the *adulteration of articles used for food* have been assigned to a competent committee; by a special committee, a most elaborate and practical Report has been made on the *Condition of the Population in Tenement Houses* in this city, and their effects upon their inmates; and during the year that valuable Report, as enlarged and published by its author, has been sent forth in large editions, in the form of that thrilling volume, "LOST AND FOUND."

At a large public meeting of the Association, a practical discourse on the Hygienic Influences and Uses of SUNLIGHT was delivered by one of our members; and at the same meeting several stirring addresses were made, of which that by Hon. Erastus Brooks deserves especial mention, as it was published and widely circulated.

The Association having requested Lieut. Vielè to prepare a large topographical and hydrographical map of the city of New York, which should, in advance of his anticipated report on an effective system of drainage, serve to *illustrate* the importance of such a system, a special meeting of the Association was called for the purpose of listening to that distinguished engineer's remarks, and viewing the illustrations he would make upon the subject. It was a meeting of peculiar interest, and Mr. Vielè's paper was published, and extensively circulated by the daily press. At a subsequent meeting one of our medical associates presented



an elaborate report upon the geology and medical topography of the *twenty-second* ward of this city. On another occasion, when the *final* report of the Committee on tenement houses and their inmates was presented, it was observed that thirty clergymen, and a much larger number of physicians, were present, many of whom took part in the discussions of the meeting. Again the Association was favored with an elaborate essay, exhibiting statistics, showing the percentage of pauperism in different countries, and the ratios of death at different ages. A committee was appointed to continue investigations upon this subject, which had been thus ably brought before the Association and the public, by the distinguished statistician, Dr. Wynne. At the next meeting a graphic report of the eighth aldermanic district of this city was read, and, like Dr. Wynne's, has since been copied throughout the United States. To Mr. E. T. Robbins, to the Venerable Dr. Francis, Rev. Dr. Bellows, Rev. T. L. Cuyler, Rev. Dr. Hague, Prof. Ordronaux, and many others, the Association is likewise indebted for addresses of great interest.

At subsequent meetings various committees continued to report, in part, and several new ones have, from time to time, been appointed, among which are mentioned—committees to report upon the improper sale and use of poisons; upon the sanitary relations of light; upon the hours of *labor* or *exercise*, *study* and *rest*; and another on the *agency*, *interests*, and *influence of woman in promoting improvements in domestic hygiene*. These are examples—the evidences—of the purposes and spirit of the Association. And to this brief abstract of its proceedings might be added the sketch of personal labors, not only of particular members, but of various gentlemen who have casually become interested in the objects and efforts of this institution. Among the



latter class of friends may be named a large number of clergymen, physicians, and philanthropic citizens.

From the foregoing sketch of the Association's proceedings, it will be observed that a considerable variety of highly important subjects have been considered at the regular sessions, and that investigations have been commenced by various committees upon many subjects of practical importance and public interest. This is but the *commencement* of labors for the promotion of sanitary improvements and the advancement of sanitary science. The rich fruits of such labors, we hope and believe, are to be enjoyed hereafter by entire communities; but in a peculiar and a very practical sense it will be found that the laborers for the health and happiness of their fellow creatures, will *themselves* be rewarded with personal and social benefits that they did not directly seek. He that promotes the health and happiness of his fellow men is doubly blessed, for by the same means that he employs to benefit his fellow beings, he becomes prepared to appreciate and promote his own and his family's welfare; and also as a natural consequence, in his philanthropic labors to protect and benefit his neighbor, however poor or degraded, he becomes benefited and protected in return. Illustrations of this truth will readily occur to every mind. Human society is full of evidences that—

“The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

The *incidental* fruits of the discussions at our stated meetings are often of a strikingly interesting and instructive

character. The following are among the many illustrations that may serve to impress upon our minds the practical importance and direct results of the discussions and suggestive reports and essays which the Association calls forth.

The Principal of one of our largest schools was present at a meeting, when the importance and means of *ventilation* were discussed and illustrated; and although he had for years been making improvements in the plans of ventilation in his school-rooms, he has recently remarked that the suggestions in that discussion immediately induced him to make a *wiser use* of his means for supplying pure air; so that since discussion the thousand children under his charge have enjoyed an abundant supply of fresh air—the ventilation having been improved simply in consequence of his own more intelligent and conscientious attention to the subject. Here we see a thousand children, and hundreds of families, have been directly and permanently benefited by this improvement; while the Principal and his assistants, by the same means, have procured for themselves the double advantage of salubrious air, and greater ease and enjoyment in their labors of instruction and school-room discipline.

Again, a distinguished literary gentleman, who was present at a meeting when the hygienic importance of *sunlight* was under consideration, some time afterwards was heard to say, that by putting in practice the principles and suggestions of the essay and discussions of that occasion, his own nervous system and his mental and bodily powers had been greatly invigorated; and that if such teachings were enjoyed and regarded by sedentary persons, and all who lead an indoor life, they would reap advantages inestimable.

The recent reports and discussions upon the disastrous consequences of *marriages of consanguinity*, have produced indelible impressions upon all who listened to them, and if that subject is brought fairly to the attention of families and

the masses of the people, the results of such reports and discussions will be experienced by unnumbered generations.

And not less could be affirmed of certain questions connected with inebriety, narcotic excesses, and certain specific causes of deterioration of the human race. And all these subjects invite extended inquiry and free discussion.

As previously remarked, it must be admitted that the incidental and immediate fruits of this Association's efforts are such as amply to reward all the labor and time which it receives from its members. Yet it is manifest that the ultimate objects will be enriched by perennial and more abundant fruit. For the attainment of those objects we might consistently labor, and it would be our duty, even if no *immediate*, no incidental benefits, were conferred upon the community. The objects, the necessities, and the moral influences which called this Association into existence were, and they still continue to be, such as insure the perpetuity of its organization, its plans, and its labors. To promote the sanitary and social welfare of our fellow beings in this world will ever remain one of the first among Christian duties, and by every proper means it is the duty of every person to promote the diffusion of practical knowledge, and seek the enactment and execution of proper laws for human improvement.\*

\* The efforts put forth by this Association for the improvement of Health Laws will doubtless be crowned with success whenever the public mind becomes fully awakened to the importance of sanitary reforms. This department of labor in the Association has been placed in charge of competent committees, who have given to the subject their patient and continued attention; and it is believed that the outline of a Sanitary Code, which they have at last completed, after many months of inquiry and consultation, will be acceptable to the Legislature, and happily adapted to the practical wants of our metropolis. But whatever may be the immediate results of this branch of their labors, it is the imperative duty of this Association not to relax

Under a strictly democratic government, like that of our American States, where all laws and every feature of State polity spring directly from the people, reforms, improvements, and progress, whether in our social economy, or in the laws and affairs of state, do, almost without exception,

its efforts to secure the enactment and execution of wholesome sanitary regulations in this vast centre of population and commerce. There is no other public organization among us that can undertake the work which has, from the very constitution of this Association, been thrown upon it to carry forward. But, while urged by all the claims of humanity and public economy to press forward these efforts, we heartily concur with the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, "that an enlightened public sentiment is the surest guarantee of the needed reforms;" and further, "that the public, in the absence of such a sentiment, must share with the magistracy the responsibility for the existence and continuance of these great social evils. The power is in the people. Let them demand such reforms as the vital interests of the city require, and they will come—not otherwise. No one, meanwhile, can consistently complain of the frightful waste of human life in this city, and its direful consequences, who does not regard the causes as specialties demanding his personal influence and co-operation with the public authorities for their correction and removal."

That charitable association, which for seventeen years has annually canvassed all the *pauvres faubourgs* and the habitations of want in this city, has from year to year taken increasing interest in the questions of sanitary reforms and improved health laws, and the co-operation of that Association to secure such reforms is a fact full of significance and encouragement.

Until recently, there appears to have been a general opinion, that in matters relating to health, in our American cities, all the private and public interests should be self-regulating, without the interposition of specific laws. But this erroneous opinion is now giving place to a sound public sentiment in favor of wholesome sanitary regulations. The Earl of Shaftesbury has recently remarked, that "in America, sanitary arrangements are even more necessary than they are in England, because their larger towns are in great peril from evil circumstances far excelling the worst of ours." "



originate with individuals, and with the people in their primary and voluntary associations. Laws and public measures for the benefit of the people, do not usually spring spontaneously from the wisdom and goodness of our legislators, nor are the laws and public measures of our self-governing States apt to be servile transcripts from those of other countries. Public measures and our statutes, no less than social and private improvements among us, *originate with the people*, either in their individual or associated capacity. Self-interest and a conscientious sense of personal duty usually determine the introduction both of physical and social improvements, and to these powerful motives we may always safely appeal.

Acting in view of this obvious truth, the friends of sanitary improvement have undertaken a work that is doubtless as practicable as it is necessary—viz. the improvement of the sanitary condition of the people, and, so far as connected therewith, the advancement of their economic and moral interests:—

*First*, By promoting the investigation of facts and principles relating to personal, domiciliary, and public Hygiene;

*Second*, By diffusing information on the laws of health and life, and the best means for their application.

It will be recollected by many of the members of the Association that the earnest desire of the friends of reform, for the diffusion of information and the increase of popular interest upon this subject, led to our public organization for this specific purpose. Providentially this organization was placed upon a basis or plan that invited the co-operation and sympathies of various classes in the community; and in fulfilling the great objects of the Association, as above quoted from its Constitution, such a basis will doubtless be found well adapted to its philanthropic design.

The preceding summary of proceedings shows that the

Association's work of investigation in the several branches of personal, domiciliary, and public hygiene, has been fairly commenced. But the Council recommend that the members of the Association be advised to pursue their labors of investigation and inquiry to greater completeness, when practicable; and that the reports of the committees be carefully prepared and attentively studied by the authors, previously to being presented; and that in cases which admit of rendering a report in parts or sections, such parts be presented from time to time, for discussion by the Association, in order to keep up a general interest upon the subjects under consideration by committees, and also for the purpose of eliciting facts and suggestions from the members.

Though such works are, in a peculiar sense, "labors of love," we believe that both the laborer and the objects of the labor will derive the greatest advantages when we faithfully observe the good proverb, "What's worth doing at all is worth doing well."

The Council have deemed it to be their duty to state that in their opinion it is desirable that the various investigations and inquiries that have been commenced, or that are contemplated, should be pressed forward systematically and in earnest, until full and practical reports upon the various sanitary questions shall be brought fully before the people.\*

\* The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, which was organized in England during the year 1856, has already demonstrated the vast utility of a popular association for promoting and systematizing the inquiries and efforts of philanthropic and scientific minds in works for human improvement. And it is a notable fact that the investigation and discussion of sanitary questions are among the most prominent themes that engage the attention of that vast association of political economists, *savants*, and divines. At the first Annual Meeting of that body, there were thirty-six elaborate contributions presented upon questions directly connected with

The *second* great object of Association, as previously quoted from the Constitution, though *secondary* in the natural order of sequence in the progress of our labors, is really of *primary* importance in the work to be accomplished by this organization. *The general diffusion* of knowledge relating to the laws of Life and Health, together with practical instruction respecting the best means of their application, is unquestionably the most important object of the Association; and we believe the time has arrived when comprehensive plans and systematic efforts should be brought into operation for the wide diffusion of such information, and for universal and practical applications of such knowledge. The precise plans and agencies by which this department of labor may most advantageously be prosecuted are yet to be determined. But it cannot be doubted that there will be found ample ways and means for the accomplishment of such good works of philanthropy and social economy.

To the educated classes the way of access is ever open. The press, the active spirit of inquiry, and an enlightened recognition of religious obligation to promote personal and public purity, cheerfulness, and health, constitute the best agencies that can be brought to bear upon this subject. But to the uneducated and the poor this gospel of health must be carried. To the lowest classes the lessons of health and social economy must be taught by specially qualified *missionaries of health and social improvement*. Friendly instruction must also be made a constant attendant, and auxiliary—of all our charities to those classes. The suggestive card of plain directions and advice on those daily practices which relate to Domestic Economy and Health, should be hung up in every tenement home of the poor, and Hygiene, and a still larger number upon practical questions connected with social economy. Their published proceedings make annual volumes of seven or eight hundred pages.

should invariably accompany all our almsgiving, and should also be made to accompany the ordinary payments of wages for labor performed by the poorer classes, to serve as an insurance for their prudent disbursement, as well as to encourage sanitary and social improvements.\*

The precise plan and various methods which may be most happily adapted for the good work of diffusing specific information and friendly counsel upon this subject, are yet to be presented and put into operation; but the work will not be difficult of accomplishment, for the poor and the ignorant are peculiarly accessible when approached with the right spirit, and with really practicable suggestions for the improvement of their condition. And it is hoped that during the ensuing year this Association will be enabled successfully to devise and prosecute measures for this desirable purpose. We may, at least, safely follow the good example of the British Association for the Diffusion of Sanitary Science, in the work of preparing and distributing cheap and attractive publications, giving *plain advice, and simple practical rules* respecting ventilation, lighting, heating, cleanliness, *household economy*, and personal health, etc.

We are engaged in a progressive work that will for ever be presenting philanthropic minds with fresh incentives and

\* An institution having these and other objects in view was a few years ago organized, and is at present in successful operation, in England, under the title of the "Ladies' National Association for the Diffusion of Sanitary Knowledge." By means of health tracts, special instruction of mothers, nurses, and governesses, cheap publications, and popular lectures upon domestic hygiene, that Association is doing a vast amount of good in an unostentatious and highly acceptable manner. It is believed that there exists a wide field in which the ladies of New York might successfully co-operate with the Sanitary Association in establishing an institution similar to that above referred to. In no other city is there greater need of instructing the lower classes in the science of common life and the principles of Domestic Hygiene.



new aspects, and that will always call forth earnest efforts and fervent desires for the moral and the physical elevation of our fellow-beings. Our earlier labors have been directed principally to the investigation of simple facts, and to the preparation of plans and means for effectually accomplishing the *ultimate* objects of the Association; and we believe that all who have engaged in these efforts have become permanently interested in those objects, and will continue to labor with increasing intelligence for human improvement.

During this *first* period of the Association's history, it was to be expected that its real objects and essential design would be peculiarly liable to be misapprehended, and, by men accustomed to judge all things by mercenary and selfish standards, there might have been misrepresentations; but it is a gratifying fact that this Association has been very kindly regarded by all classes of good men in this city, and throughout our country. The organization was at first regarded as an *experiment*, which might not prove successful, however laudable its purposes; but we are now permitted to rejoice in the prospect of its permanent and substantial usefulness.

The Association now numbers upwards of two hundred and fifty members. It includes a large proportion of names which have long been known among the friends of human improvement. The professions of Medicine, Law, Public Instruction, and Divinity, and all the callings of commercial and industrial life, are fairly represented in the membership. The wealthiest and oldest of our citizens have not stood aloof from sympathy and co-operation with the Association, nor has any class of honest men been excluded from participation in its deliberations. Providence has beneficently prospered our organization during this first period of its history; and now, with grateful and strong hearts, we may hopefully and humbly press forward the labors that are

already begun, and also enter upon the execution of the great *practical works* which constitute the *ultimate* objects of the NEW YORK SANITARY ASSOCIATION.